

Message Text

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INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

SAJ-01 COME-00 STR-04 CIEP-01 CEA-01 EA-07 NEA-10

SSC-01 /105 W

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O R 281623Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4418

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

USMISSION OECD PARIS

USMISSION USUN

USCINCEUR

AMCONSUL BORDEAUX

AMCONSUL LYON

AMCONSUL MARSEILLE

AMCONSUL NICE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 PARIS 25059

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: FR, PINT

SUBJECT: MR. BARRE'S CABINET - EMBASSY COMMENTS

REF: PARIS 24730

1. THE MOST SALIENT POINTS OF YESTERDAY'S CABINET CHANGE ARE AS FOLLOWS:

A. A NEARLY 17 PER CENT DROP IN THE TOTAL NUMBER OF MINISTERS AND STATE SECRETARIES, FROM 43 TO 36 (WITH A CONCURRENT INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF FULL MINISTERS FROM 16 TO 18).

B. THE STRONG MAINTENANCE OF UDR POWER IN THE GOVERNMENT (9 UDR AS COMPARED TO 13 UNDER CHIRAC, BUT, STILL HOLDING PRESTIGIOUS POSITIONS AND TITLES).

C. THE INCREASED PROPORTION OF CENTRIST POWER IN THE GOVERNMENT, 7 SLOTS, AND OF IR POWER, HOLDING STRONG AT 10, IN SPITE OF THE CABINETS DECREASED SIZE.

D. THE SHARP JUMP IN NUMBER OF THOSE BEARING THE TITLE "PRESIDENTIAL MAJORITY," FROM 4 TO 10, WITH THE CONCURRENT MANIFEST EVIDENCE OF GISCARD'S FURTHER EFFORTS TO PRESIDENTIALIZE THE REGIME.

E. THE STRONG EMPHASIS THAT IS TO BE LAID ON ECONOMIC AND MONETARY PROBLEMS.

THESE POINTS ARE DISCUSSED IN TURN BELOW.

2. THE UDR HOLDS STRONG: THE FACTS GIVE THE LIE TO THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN PREDICTING THAT THE UDR WOULD BE OUT FOR BLOOD BECAUSE OF CHIRAC'S DEMISE. ONE OF THE QTE BARONS' ENDQTE VERY OWN (ALBEIT ONE OF THE MORE MODERATE AS FAR AS CLASSIC GAULLIST DOCTRINE IS CONCERNED) OLIVIER GUICHARD, ACQUIRES AT THE SAME TIME BOTH THE MOST IMPORTANT MINISTRY (JUSTICE) AFTER BARRE, AND THE PRESTIGIOUS TITLE OF MINISTER OF STATE. GAULLIST POLITICIANS THEMSELVES HAVE BEEN GIVING REPEATED ASSURANCES THAT ITS PARTY IS NOT PLANNING A RECKLESS MOVE. FORMER PM MICHEL DEBRE, IN AN AUGUST 27 TELEVISED INTERVIEW, DECLARED HIMSELF QTE HAPPILY SURPRISED
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ENDQTE BY THE STRESS THAT IS TO BE LAID ON INFLATIONARY PROBLEMS. FORMER UDR MINISTER ALAIN PEYREFITTE FEELS THAT GISCARDIAN POLICIES ARE QTE RIGHT IN LINE WITH GAULLIST PRINCIPLES, ENDQTE AND CLAUDE LUBBE, LEADER OF THE UDR NATIONAL ASSEMBLY GROUP, STATED FLATLY THAT THE PARTY HAS NO INTENTION OF LEAVING THE MAJORITY. FINALLY, NUMEROUS EMBASSY CONTACTS IN THE UDR HAVE REPEATEDLY

ASSURED US THAT THE PARTY WILL NOT MOVE INTO SOME KIND OF OPPOSITION (SEE FOR EXAMPLE PARIS 25030).

3. THERE IS NONETHELESS A CHANCE THAT CERTAIN UDR DEPUTIES WILL MANIFEST THEIR DISPLEASURE AT THE CABINET CHANGE IN A DRAMATIC WAY: HECTOR ROLLAND, FOR EXAMPLE, OR CHARLES BIGNON, WHO REPUTEDLY ASKED PARTY LEADERS TO SUSPEND ANY MEMBER WHO ACCEPTED A POST IN THE NEW CABINET. THE LIKELIHOOD IS, HOWEVER, THAT UNLESS THE EXODUS WERE IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO REPRESENT A SIGNIFICANT PROPORTION OF PARTY DEPUTIES (SAY 15-20 PERCENT), THOSE LEAVING THE RANKS WOULD FIND THEMSELVES ISOLATED, MUCH AS FORMER UDR MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS MICHEL JOBERT, OR FORMER UDR DEPUTY AND CURRENT MAYOR OF BRIVE JEAN CHARBONNEL.

4. QTE TOWARDS THE CENTER-LEFT.ENDQTE. THE PRESIDENT MADE THE POINT IN HIS TELEVISED INTERVIEW OF AUGUST 25 THAT HE WANTED TO QTE WIDEN HIS MAJORITY TOWARDS THE CENTER-LEFT.ENDQTE (PARIS 24923). THE NEW CABINET IS A FLAT CONFIRMATION OF THIS AIM, WITH THE CENTRISTS MOVING

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SAJ-01 COME-00 STR-04 CIEP-01 CEA-01 EA-07 NEA-10

SSC-01 /105 W

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O R 281623Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4419

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
USMISSION NATO
USMISSION OECD PARIS
USMISSION USUN
USCINCEUR
AMCONSUL BORDEAUX
AMCONSUL LYON
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 4 PARIS 25059

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARAGRAPH SIX)

FROM 16 PER CENT OF THE PREVIOUS CABINET TO 20 PERCENT OF THIS ONE. THE ACCENT ON CENTER-QTE LEFT ENDQTE IS STRESSED BY THE ARRIVAL OF SENATOR PIERRE BROUSE, A RENEGADE LEFT-RADICAL WHO FOLLOWED THE PARTIES FORMER LEADER, HENRI CAILLAVET INTO THE MAJORITY LAST YEAR. THUS THE PRESIDENT WOULD SEEM TO BE ALLOWING HIMSELF A DOUBLE TACK IN PREPARATION FOR THE 1978 PRES DENTIAL ELECTIONS. ON THE ONE HAND, THE STRENGTHENING OF THE CENTER'S LEFT WING MAY SERVE TO ATTRACT LEFT RADICAL AND EVEN SOME MODERATE SOCIALIST VOTERS. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE PRESIDENT MAY FEEL THAT ANY EVENTUAL PASSAGE TO THE LEFT (READ MITTERAND) OF MATIGNON WOULD BE RENDERED LESS UNSETTLING BY THE FACT THAT QTE PROGRESSIVE ENDQTE ELEMENTS ARE ALREADY IN THE GOVERNMENT. WHATEVER THE CASE CENTRIST POWER IN THE CABINET UNDERSCORES THE EMPHASIS THAT GISCARD WILL CONTINUE TO LAY ON HIS REFORM PROGRAM.

5. ALTHOUGH JEAN LECANUET (CENTRIST) LOSES HIS OLD POST AS MINISTER OF JUSTICE, HE DROPS FORMALLY ONLY ONE SLOT

IN THE NEW HEIRARCHY (IN WHICH HIS FORMER MINISTRY MOVES UP FROM THIRD TO SECOND PLACE) AND ACQUIRES A NEW MINISTRY, PLANNING AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT, THAT WILL PLAY A KEY ROLE IN THE REFORM PROGRAM. LECANUET'S UNFLAGGING SUPPORT OF THE PRESIDENT AND HIS POLICIES, AND HIS ACKNOWLEDGED ROLE AS LEADER OF THE CENTRISTS, MADE HIM AN QTE UNDROPABLE ENDQTE MINISTER. THE POST OF MINISTER FOR ECONOMY AND FINANCE ASSIGNED TO THE PM HAS ALSO BEEN ACQUIRED BY A CENTRIST (RADICAL, I.E. LEFT-OF-CENTER), DURAFOUR, WHO HAS ALSO FAITHFULLY SUPPORTED THE PRESIDENT. IF THE PRESIDENT'S GAMBLE WORKS AND HE SUCCEEDS IN ATTRACTING SOME OF THE MODERATE LEFT INTO HIS MAJORITY, IT WILL BE IN PART DUE TO THE PRESENCE OF THESE MEN.

6. THE PRESIDENTIAL MAJORITY: THOSE BEARING THAT
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TITLE, INCLUDING THE NEW PM, HIMSELF, ARE NOW A SURPRISING 27 PERCENT OF THE NEW CABINET (UP FROM 9 PERCENT). NO LESS THAN A THIRD OF THE 15 MINISTERS, INCLUDING TECHNOCRATS LIKE BEULLAC AND THE NEW MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS GUIRINGAUD, ARE SO LABELED. IT WOULD SEEM, THEN, THAT THE PRESIDENT IS SUCCEEDING IN HIS EFFORTS TO QTE PRESENTENTRALIZE ENDQTE THE REGIME, TO GATHER POWER AROUND THE PRESIDENT MORE AS THE MAN WHO HOLDS THE ELYSEE THAN AS THE HIGHEST REPRESENTATIVE OF A PARTICULAR PARTY. THOSE WHO SUPPORT HIM CLAIM THAT THE ENDEMIC - AND DEBILITATING - SQUABBLING AMONG THE MAJORITY PARTIES WILL END AS A RESULT. THOSE WHO OPPOSE HIM CLAIM THAT THE EFFECT OF PRESIDENTIALIZATION WOULD BE TO BI-POLARIZE FRENCH POLITICS, THEREBY VASTLY DIMINISHING THE NUMBER OF OPTIONS, AND OF PROPOSED SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS, THAT A VARIEGATED POLITICAL WORLD OFFERS. THE TRUTH CONTAINS SOME OF BOTH THEORIES, THOUGH IT IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT THE FRENCH POLITICAL SCENE WOULD BE REDUCED TO ONLY TWO RIGID TENDENCIES AS A RESULT OF VGE'S EFFORTS.

7. PRESIDENTIALIZATION WILL ALSO TAKE THE FORM OF MORE POWER CENTERED AT THE ELYSEE AND LESS AT MATIGNON; HERE WE TOUCH ON THE SOREST POINT BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND HIS FORMER PM. CHIRAC LEARNED, AS HAVE MANY OF HIS PREDECESSORS, THAT FIFTH REPUBLIC PRESIDENTS GET WORRIED WHEN IT LOOKS AS IF THEIR PM'S ARE TRYING TO TAKE OVER POLICY MAKING. BUT GISCARD ALSO LEARNED THAT BY BY-PASSING HIS PM AND DEALING DIRECTLY WITH MINISTERS AND STATE SECRETARIES HIMSELF, HE WOULD INVARIABLY INCUR THE DISPLEASURE OF THE PM, WHO WOULD FEEL THAT THE PRESIDENT WAS INTERFERING TOO MUCH IN HIS DOMAIN. IT SEEMS LIKELY

THAT VGE AND BARRE HAVE A PRETTY CLEAR UNDERSTANDING
AS TO WHO WILL DO WHAT AND HOW (THOUGH IF THE FIFTH
REPUBLIC PATTERN CONTINUES, WE CAN EXPECT TO SEE THE
SAME POWER STRUGGLE EMERGING BETWEEN THE TWO MEN AS TIME
GOES ON).

8. FINALLY, PRESIDENTIALIZATION HOLDS INHERENT RISKS
FOR GISCARD. FROM NOW ON IT WILL BE MORE DIFFICULT FOR
THE PRESIDENT TO PIN FAILED GOF POLICY ON THE CABINET;
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WHILE THE PRESIDENT WILL GET ALL THE CREDIT WHEN THINGS
GO WELL, HE WILL ALSO GET THE FULL BLAME WHEN THINGS GO
WRONG. IT WILL OBVIOUSLY BE DIFFICULT TO HOLD
BARRE SOLELY RESPONSIBLE WHEN ALL FRANCE KNOWS THAT THE
PRESIDENT WANTS - THOUGH THAT MAY NOT EXACTLY BE TO SAY

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SAJ-01 COME-00 STR-04 CIEP-01 CEA-01 EA-07 NEA-10

SSC-01 /105 W

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O R 281623Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4420

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
USMISSION NATO
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USCINCEUR
AMCONSUL BORDEAUX
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 04 PARIS 25059

HE HAS NOW GOTTEN - A SUPER CHEF-DU-CABINET RATHER THAN
A MAN WHO INCORPORATES GREAT POWERS IN HIMSELF AND HIS
OFFICE.

9. THE ECONOMY: GISCARD HAS DECIDED, AS MICHEL DEBRE
DECIDED YEARS AGO, THAT CHRONIC INFLATION IS FRANCE'S
PUBLIC ENEMY NUMBER ONE. THE NEW CABINET
REFLECTS THIS NOT ONLY IN ITS COMPOSITION, WITH FINANCE
EXPRRT BARRE AT THE TOP, BUT IN ITS ORGANIZATION.
DURAFOUR'S TITLE READS EXACTLY QTW MINISTER FOR ECONOMY
AND FINANCE ASSIGNED TO THE PRIME MINISTER ENDQTE. BARRE
THUS DIRECTLY ASSUMES CONTROL OVER HOW THE PROBLEMS OF
INFLATION AND MONETARY INSTABILITY WILL BE HANDLED. IN
FACT, BARRE HAS ALREADY MADE CLEAR THAT HE WILL ATTACK
INFLATION AT THE BASE, RATHER THAN ATTEMPT TO CONTROL IT
THROUGH PROVISIONAL MEASURES THAT ALL TOO OFTEN LEAD TO
OTHER ILLS. THE FACT THAT DURAFOUR HAS HAD LITTLE DIRECT
EXPERIENCE IN ECONOMIC MATTERS WILL ALSO REINFORCE BARRE'S
CONTROL OVER THE ECONOMY. UNDER SUCH CONDITIONS SHOULD
THE PRESIDENT, HIMSELF A FINANCE EXPERT, AND HIS EQUALLY
COMPETENT (IN THE SAME FIELD) PM FAIL TO SOLVE FRANCE'S

PRESSING ECONOMIC AND MONETARY PROBLEMS, WE CAN EXPECT THAT GISCARD WILL FIND HIMSELF IN MORE SERIOUS TROUBLE THAN AT ANY TIME SINCE HIS ELECTION. IT IS DIFFICULT TO GIVE AN EXACT TIMETABLE, BUT THE NEW GOVERNMENT WILL CERTAINLY HAVE TO HAVE THINGS MORE OR LESS CLEANED UP BEFORE THE SPRING 1978 LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS.

10. A REDUCED CABINET. ANOTHER SURPRISE IS THE FACT THAT SOME OF THE IMPORTANT QTE REFORM ENDQTE STATE SECRETARYSHIPS (PROFESSIONAL FORMATION, PENAL AFFAIRS, WOMENS' AFFAIRS) HAVE BEEN ABOLISHED, THOUGH IN MOST CASES THEIR FUNCTIONS HAVE BEEN INCORPORATED INTO OTHER MINISTRIES. THIS DOES NOT IMPLY HOWEVER, IN ANY RESPECT, THAT THE PRESIDENT INTENDS TO SLOW DOWN HIS REFORM PROGRAM. WHAT IT HIGH-LIGHTS IS VGE'S CONTENTION
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THAT THE PREVIOUS CABINET WAS TOO LARGE, AND THAT STREAMLINING WAS NEEDED. HE LAMENTED THE LACK OF A TEAM SPIRIT IN CHIRAC'S CABINET. (IN HIS LAST ADDRESS TO HIS CABINET, ON AUGUST 25, CHIRAC ALLEGEDLY ACCUSED SOME OF HIS COLLABORATORS OF BETRAYING HIM), AND IN HIS FIRST ADDRESS TO THE NEW CABINET ON AUGUST 28 EXPRESSED HIS HOPE THAT THERE WOULD BE MORE OF AN ESPRIT-DE-CORPS AND LESS FACTIONAL RIVALTY. THE POLITICAL COMPOSITION OF THE NEW CABINET WOULD SEEM TO MAKE MORE COOPERATION POSSIBLE.

11. THE OTHER SURPRISE IN THE CABINET CHANGE IS THE HARSH DEMOTION OF FINANCE MINISTER JEAN-PIERRE FOURCADE. DROPPED FROM FIFTH PLACE TO TENTH, STRIPPED OF THE FINANCE MINISTRY FOR WHICH HE WAS SUPERBLY PREPARED AND ASKED TO LOOK AFTER BRIDGES, ROADS, PORTS, PUBLIC WORKS, ETC. (HE IS NOW MINISTER OF EQUIPMENT)- THIS MUST BE HARD TO SWALLOW FOR THE MAN WHO HAS VIGOROUSLY, EVEN AGGRESSIVELY, SUPPORTED THE PRESIDENT RIGHT FROM THE START. WE CAN INTERPRET HIS DEMISE TO THE FACT THAT THE PRESIDENT'S AVOWED GOAL OF WHIPPING INFLATION WOULD RING HOLLOW IF HE KEPT THE VERY MAN WHOM MANY FRENCHMEN FEEL DID ABSOLUTELY NOTHING TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION. FOURCADE'S OWN REPLY TO A REPORTER'S QUESTION OF WHAT POST HE WOULD HOLD IN THE NEW CABINET, ASKED ONLY HOURS BEFORE THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THAT CABINET'S COMPOSITION, REFLECT HIS STATE OF MIND: QTE

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SSC-01 /105 W

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O R 281623Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4421

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

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ALAS, YOU'LL KNOW TONIGHT ENDQTE. HOWEVER, HE IS NOW A WELL-KNOWN FIGURE AND REMAINS IN THE GOVERNMENT.

12. CONCLUSION: WITH A MINISTER OF STATE NAMED FROM EACH OF THE MAJOR FACTIONS OF THE MAJORITY (UDR, INDEPENDENT REPUBLICANS, CENTRISTS), WITH THE GAULLISTS STILL FIRMLY IN PLACE, WITH THE REASSURANCE TO THE AVERAGE FRENCHMAN THAT FRANCE'S BIG ECONOMIC PROBLEMS ARE GOING TO BE TACKLED, GISCARD CAN REASONABLY LOOK FORWARD TO REDUCED SQUABBLING IN THE GOF, AND A GREATER SENSE AMONG AVERAGE FRENCHMEN THAT HE IS MORE FIRMLY IN CONTROL AND HAS GIVEN A REAL DIRECTION TO HIS POLICIES. AS THE EMBASSY HAS REPORTED, THE PRESIDENT HAS EVERY INTENTION OF REMAINING IN OFFICE UNTIL 1981, AND AT LEAST FOR THE TIME BEING APPEARS TO HAVE REMOVED HIMSELF FROM AN INTOLERABLE SITUATION (OF NEAR OPEN RIVALRY WITH HIS PM) AND REINFORCED HIS IMAGE AND HIS POWERS. WHETHER OR NOT HE SUCCEEDS IN ACHIEVING THE STRICTLY POLITICAL GOAL HE HAS SET THROUGH THE COMPOSITION OF HIS NEW CABINET (WOOING THE LEFT) WILL DEPEND LARGELY ON HOW WELL HE SUCCEEDS IN ACHIEVING HIS OTHER GOALS (STOPPING INFLATION, PUSHING REFORM, ETC). AS PARIS PUNSTERS WERE SAYING: QTE BARRE A LA BARRE ENDQTE. (THIS IS A REFERENCE TO VGE'S 1974 CAMPAIGN SLOGAN QTE GISCARD A LA BARRE ENDQTE - GISCARD AT THE HELM). BUT GISCARD CLEARLY INTENDS THAT FIFTH REPUBLIC CONSTITUTIONAL AMBIGUITY ON THIS SCORE WILL BE DECIDED IN FAVOR OF THE PRESIDENT.
GAMMON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CABINET, REORGANIZATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 AUG 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: BoyleJA
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976PARIS25059
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760328-0434
From: PARIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760810/aaaaahys.tel
Line Count: 530
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 10
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 PARIS 24730
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: BoyleJA
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <05 APR 2004 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <03 AUG 2004 by BoyleJA>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MR. BARRE'S CABINET - EMBASSY COMMENTS
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, FR, (BARRE, RAYMOND)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006